

## BETTER LAWS FOR BETTER ECONOMIES

We live in an age of technological advances, of continuous, high-speed progress through innovation. The improvements in living standards created in this environment should be no less available to those in developing economies than they are in more developed societies.

At the EBRD, we are proud of our role in helping our regions embrace the future. Our mandate is to invest in changing people's lives in 38 economies, across three continents. So where does the EBRD's Legal Transition Programme feature in this picture? How does it fit with the core values that underpin the Bank's activity?

The Bank's mission is to develop open and sustainable market economies and promote private and entrepreneurial initiative. Our investments fuel that development but the impact of our funds depends on the context into which they are deployed. Key to that is the investment climate. Investors value a legal system and a regulatory framework that, together, create a level playing field for all market participants. This is precisely what the EBRD's policy engagements, and our Legal Transition Programme, is about.

The Legal Transition Programme reviews the law on the books and its application in practice, testing for weaknesses. And having identified a need for our support, we partner with our governmental and regulatory "clients" to devise technical cooperation projects, mobilise donor funding and collaborate with international experts to support the necessary legal or regulatory reform that will open up our region to greater investment. Our programme also supports local judiciaries with commercial law training, and

develops alternative forms of dispute resolution such as mediation, thereby improving access to justice.

What drives the Bank is a vision of entrepreneurial economies with opportunities for all. Our lawyers understand that legal reform is not an academic exercise. Legal and regulatory systems do not exist in a vacuum. They serve society, including business, and must respond to society's demands accordingly. Entrepreneurs require confidence in fair and predictable court decisions, which can then be reliably enforced. Investors look for the highest standards in corporate governance. A changing world necessitates focus on energy efficiency, ever more inventive alternative forms of finance, greater gender equality, creative partnerships between the public and private sectors. We recognise that these overlapping and sometimes competing priorities can seem overwhelming to policymakers. Our lawyers take pride in guiding their governmental and regulatory "clients" through the issues.

Lastly, the EBRD takes an internationalist approach, espousing the values of economic integration and multilateralism to fight common challenges. Accordingly, our Legal Transition Programme makes extensive use of international standards as a reform tool. It also seeks to establish partnerships with other multilateral organisations to leverage its efforts.

This year's *Law in Transition* journal includes some excellent examples of our legal reform work which help you understand how our programme makes a difference to the lives of people in our regions.

I wish you an enlightening and inspiring read.



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